

PAPA'S HOUSE MAGAZINE

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LETTERS FROM THE LOCKDOWN

PHOTO: MICHAEL HESS



KHAUSILA



RAM SARAN



SITA



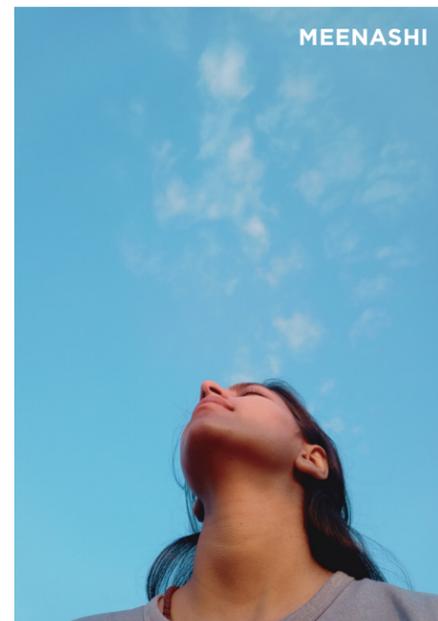
NAMA



KAILASHI



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MEENASHI



LETTERS FROM THE LOCKDOWN

People around the world have been coping with major disruptions in their lives in recent months due to Covid-19, some with fear, others with grim resolve, still others with grace and compassion. Just like with other major historical events, what we remember and learn from are the stories of individuals—what they experienced and how they felt while facing new challenges. Personal narratives will provide the detail, clarity, and context for the historical record of these unusual times. And so we are collecting stories from our older children (now young adults) and staff members to provide our readers with a view of what is currently happening and how it has affected their daily lives in Nepal, as a way to preserve the present times long into the future.

Just days ago, the nationwide lockdown imposed on March 24 was lifted in most areas of Nepal, according to the Kathmandu Post, "... with a few restrictions such as a ban on large gatherings still in place. The government had imposed the nationwide lockdown in March, after two cases of Covid-19 were reported in the country. Nepal so far has reported 17,994 Covid-19 cases with 40 deaths. The lifting of the lockdown will mean unrestricted movement of people and transport services. Business will also be allowed to operate 24/7. All other provisions related to Covid-19 prevention, control and treatment will, however, continue. People are required to maintain social distancing and wear masks."

We invite you to share YOUR experiences and offer your own emerging perspective on both the present and future as we all cope with this new normal. Please write to us at info@nepalorphanshome.org. We would love to hear from you! And in the meantime, keep yourself and others safe.

EXPERIENCE OF LOCKDOWN

This current situation has been very difficult for everyone. I know everyone is stressed by being isolated, but I think it's okay to be scared, weak and frustrated when people are dying and we cannot do anything about it. There are some people who are making fun about this situation and there are those who are using this time to do something good.

This situation has been a chance to utilize my time doing I always wanted to do and had not done, like reading different books, cooking delicious food, improving my writing, and doing creative things with paper. I have been enjoying my time doing all these things and I have also been studying my course books.

In this time I have been spending time with my family. We've spent a long time doing lots of things like cooking various kinds of meals and sharing each other's feelings. Apart from that I also have been missing the days I used to have before. I am missing all of my friends and my job at the Chelsea Center.



All I am sharing is that I have been spending my time in positive ways. For this I want to say that you should love yourself, do the things you love, try to become more creative and learn something new because learning never ends, and utilize your time well.

UPDATE FROM HOME

It's almost 3 months now since the lockdown started due to the pandemic of Covid-19 which seems to be increasing more every day, particularly in Nepal. It has no doubt changed people's lives somehow in different ways and so it has changed mine. It taught me that life is very uncertain, enjoy it to the fullest, do what we love, love everybody, and be kind.

I was never a very outgoing person. So, sitting in my room every day and doing my own stuff was not that very difficult for me. However, I miss Papa, my friends, my whole NOH family, college, and everybody so much. I just cannot wait to see all of them.

For the beginning two months of lockdown, my classes were still running, online (1st Semester). So, I was kind of busy with my college assignments, preparation for the exams etc. It ended about 3 weeks ago. So now I am kind of free all day long. Usually, I try to exercise early in the morning, every day. After that, I help my mother in the kitchen. And in the afternoon, I either spend it by reading books or watching movies, dramas or by making quilling arts etc. Currently I am reading a book on online named *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom. It's very interesting so far. Other than that, I read books named *Letter to Young Artist* and *Funny Bones*. They both were very interesting and meaningful. I have also been doing some paper quilling arts. I really enjoy doing it and it's been a good way to pass time for me.

Besides that, I am enjoying the time that I am getting to spend with my younger brother. He is fun to hang out with. We



watch movies together, talk about different things and go for a short evening walk sometimes to get refreshed. He was supposed to be taking his SLC exam, but it just got cancelled. Neighbors here are nice, just little scared of the situation. Even for myself, I was so scared of the pandemic, like really scared at the beginning. But slowing I am getting used to it.

One of the things that just breaks my heart is seeing so many dogs and even birds lingering around in the neighborhood trying to find food and water. And the everyday news about people struggling to put food in their plate is sad. I hope everything gets back to normal soon.

I have been in touch with some of my friends. I just miss everybody so much. I miss going to the big hostel on Saturdays for tiffin, Papa's tight hug, get-togethers with friends, rushing to college, cooking turns, everything. I hope to see everybody very soon and am eagerly waiting to hear everybody's quarantine story.

Stay safe.



The lockdown has made this earth upside down and along with this it has made people's lives nervous and challenging.

At left is the picture of the day I went on a walk with my family members. Being on that hill I got to know: though people are not afraid of what is going on, they are very aware of it. This situation has given us big challenges. I can see many people are starving due to lack of good finances. People are looking here and there to join one's hand and one's mouth. And some people have good finances where they are living a sophisticated life. So every person's life on this earth is not the same as others'.

Life is always all about ups and downs, but I strongly feel that this is the greatest opportunity where we can learn many things. On these days I am trying different things which I haven't tried before such as on-line classes, photo editing, video making, cooking various kinds of food, and many more. More importantly I have more time to spend with my family members.



Due to the coronavirus, people here are staying inside their homes in quarantine for safety so that they won't get it, and also so that those who have the virus will not share it with others. Due to the coronavirus, many people in the world have died. Not many have died in Nepal, but the virus is increasing day to day in Nepal also.

The lifestyle of people has become difficult. For some people, family members have gotten a chance to spend time and have fun with one another and also have learned many things by staying home and helping each other. It's a good time to spend time and share the feeling of joy with family members.

Children are learning new things at home like cooking food, cleaning the house, and also hearing the childhood memories of grandparents and parents. Recalling old memories has bought smiles and laughter. But also the virus has bought pain to the people who are poor and have no food to eat.

I miss my teammates at the Chelsea Centre so much. I got an opportunity to learn a new online job through one of my friends who approached me about getting into this. It has just been a couple of weeks. It

is all about working on a team for an on-line marketing business. I have also started meditation during the lockdown. So far it's been one month and will be continuing. This lockdown also taught me a lesson that those who are dear to you will always take care of.

Whenever I go for an evening walk I see a few people around and most of them are engaged in their own work, such as on a farm. Others go for a walk when they feel life is monotonous and they have nothing to do in their home. They go for fresh air.

There are also funny moments. Whenever the police whistle, the people who have opened their shops or are walking around without any work run away.

Then we see the road become clear with no people around, and no shops open.

Lockdown has also made me sad because I lost my clothes bag where I bought lots of clothes and I am not allowed to travel to meet my mom. My sister has been sharing some clothes to wear and I got a chance to get some new clothes as well because the lockdown has made me fat.



THE PLEASURE AND THE POWER OF READING



The year 2020 has turned the world upside down and everyone has to do the social distancing whether they want to or not in order to fight Covid-19. Millions of people are unemployed which has resulted in many starving for food. And lots of people have lost their lives in foreign lands which is very sad to hear.

Last year I had a hectic year because I had to focus more on my studies than previous years and I couldn't do what I wanted.

Since the lockdown began I have gotten a chance to stay at home and read novels. The greatest pleasure of reading books and novels is that it drives me to an imaginary place and makes me feel like I am also one of the hidden characters in a novel, silently observing the role of others but not displayed as a character. Whenever I am down and have some free time I usually grab a novel because I feel most alive when I get into the story.

Sometimes I do not enjoy books, but I keep on reading hoping to learn something new. I believe the best way to use extra time is to read novels rather than wasting time. When I read novels earlier, I loved the story and nothing else. But gradually I discovered that reading them enriches and broadens my mind and makes me think more. With that aim, when I am on vacation I prefer to read books or novels so that my mind is active and engage in something. Finally I realized the power of reading.

Though this lockdown has brought hardship for many, on the other side many have gotten the opportunity to spend time with their family. But for me, it's like a break from a busy schedule. The best way to use this time is do what you love doing and for me it's reading.

The effect of Covid-19 is the enormous worldwide. It is like a tidal wave that came and hit the world all of a sudden. Every person in the world is scared of it and is trying to protect themselves. It has been 4 months since the lockdown started and is still continuing.

I came to my village a day before the lockdown started. It was hard to get the tickets for the bus because many people who temporarily stayed in Kathmandu had started returning to their native homes. Luckily, there were two empty seats left and we rode back home.

Here, I have got my brother's child, a cute little boy to take care of. He is very cute and lovely. Since it's already been 4 months taking care of him, I think I'm getting more experience taking care and looking after babies. He is with me all the day except when he is hungry. That is the only time he wants to see his mom.

As many people already know I'm in the process of going to Germany as an au pair, and similar kinds of experiences are very important. So taking care of this little baby has benefited me a lot. Everyone in my family says, "Kaushila, you are already perfect at taking care of babies. Now you just need to fly to Germany." I hope I'll get the host family soon.

In the day time, a group of children gather in my home and I teach them school courses like English, Maths, Nepali etc. I teach up to the 7th grade. Schools are closed for so long already and these children seem to have forgotten many things. So I planned to review their courses and also to let them know that continuity is important in study.

They are taking it seriously and are also improving.

I have 9 members in my family which is quite large so I don't have to worry about the other work stuff. But I do help my sisters cook food, wash dishes and also learn some German words and check my Gmail.



Staying here for so long, I've understood that life is not that easy. We must work very hard to achieve our goals. We have to struggle really hard. For example: For farmers, the work never ends. Even my parents are farmers. I always see pain in their eyes. They work very hard day and night almost every season. They work under the heat, under the rain and under the cold snow without stopping. They work really hard just for living. Seeing all of this, I feel like I should really work hard, be strong and capable, support them and make them happy. I think I'm the luckiest person that I got to grow up in NOH and live with such a large, lovely family. I have to achieve what I've got to do. My special thanks to my dearest Papa and all the volunteers who supported us. I'm missing Papa and everyone in NOH family. I'm hoping to see them soon.

Love you all!

A REPORT FROM MY VILLAGE

Each day starts with the same schedule—hard-pressed with our college life and work. We were working very hard for our board examination, but who knew that one day all that will be changed? The global pandemic had started from our neighboring country—China—which caused fear among us. Then there was a rapid growth in cases in different countries of the world. We hoped it would take time to reach our country.

Accordingly, many events like family gatherings, school events, etc. were prohibited by our government. Finally, the day came when government officials decided to lockdown our country as there was a drastic increase in new cases and the number of deaths was climbing globally.

It was devastating. Our exams were postponed and many people are unable to have a stable social life. There are people who are enjoying this time with their family, but this is not the same for everyone. There are many families where it's burdensome even to manage a meal.



I am utilizing this time by drawing and helping my grandmother with the household, watching movies, learning to cook and writing. I miss all my friends and the NOH family. It's been a long time without them. I miss Saturday gatherings, gossiping and giggling with my friends, and eating dinner together and sharing how our day went. I pray that everything will go back to normal.

UPDATE FROM HOME

The whole world is fighting against Covid-19. Here in Nepal, it is the 55th day of lockdown. The number of cases is increasing rapidly day by day. It has reached 266 to date. Two people have already died being the victim of Covid-19. The lockdown has extended further and we do not know how long this will go on.

People are staying at home in order to end this epidemic so that we can start our normal life again. The epidemic had given a top challenge to everyone, especially for those people who cannot meet their basic needs. The government is providing some basic needs to the poor people and trying their best to fight against Covid-19.

Two months of quarantine has given me an opportunity to discover the creative side of myself. I have learned to sketch, cook, and paint, and to make the best utilization of my free time. I am also doing my online classes as conducted by the college. I also watch YouTube videos and that helps me to get the information about the current situation from around the world.

Everyone is praying, hoping this will end soon.



WELCOME TO LOCKDOWN WITH MEENASHI, EPISODE NUMBER 51



It is 4:30 in the morning and I have woken up to do my daily session of yoga and meditation. Usually I wake up around 8 or 9. But last night I pledged that I would try to be extra productive.

I think this incident sums up my entire lockdown experience: Trying to be productive. Sometimes I succeed and sometimes I fail, miserably. But it's all part of the package. The best part of these days is when I try to jump high to reach that imaginary line of "Being Productive." But then I fall down so badly, only to realize that I am having no fun.

I look at my nephew and niece who have no care in the world and are simply trying to make the best of everything. Children, once again, are the wisest teachers we can have.

ONCE UPON A TIME IN LOCKDOWN

Today is May 14, 2020, Lockdown Day 52. And how I hate being at home doing the same thing every day, although we all don't have a choice in this pandemic situation.

I found the first phase of lockdown very exciting. After going to the office every day and then all of a sudden you get a pandemic leave, I wanted to do all of my pending work: my unmanaged closet, my dirty and unmanaged shoes, my unfinished art, my unwatched hit list of movies, my bare garden, my never started exercise, and every dirty corner of my house. I wanted to do every single thing and I did it. After finishing my to-do list, now all I have to do is wake up, exercise, prepare breakfast, lunch, dinner, do my dishes, a little bit of gardening, more of family time watching a movie, drawing, reading, making TikTok, watching my sister-in-law attending her online class, and searching for more things I can do.

The best part of this lockdown for me is that I restarted my childhood hobbies—gardening and drawing which I have missed all these years. The foremost things I miss are the Chelsea Centre and the aunties there. Even though I talk to the aunties (whoever is available in social media) frequently, I still miss them a lot.

I hope this hardest situation goes fast and everybody meets up again soon.

Tons and tons of love from Monica



REPORT FROM HOME

The world is struggling and fighting against Covid-19. So, here in Nepal today is the 52nd day of lockdown. People are staying at home, leaving all their chores in order to support the lockdown, so that soon we can continue with our normal life. Fortunately, Nepal has a zero death record from Covid-19 till this date, but the number of cases is increasing rapidly and has reached 250. Apart from the fear of the epidemic some people are struggling to meet their basic needs. They are struggling to provide a morsel of food for their family and I think it's a cruel time for them.

We do not know when this epidemic is going to end, but every second we are waiting to hear of the end and to breathe a sigh of relief.

Since the lockdown began, I have not been able to work either. It's been so long that I am missing basketball so badly, and I don't know how much longer it will be. Hope and Prayer are the only things that give us courage to live.

Keeping you all in my prayers and hoping again to meet you all soon. Stay home and stay safe.



Planning to write down my experience of quarantine life has been similar to the quarantine life itself. I was not sure when it would start and it would end. But here I finally begin, while the quarantine continues.

Since the beginning I experience a helplessness that I am not able to do anything for those who are suffering. I am from Nepal. We have three levels of people here: the poorest families, the middle class, and the rich ones. Maybe it's similar everywhere. The people who I hear and see are suffering the most even during the pandemic are the ones who have no money. I see them struggle more with meeting the day's needs, to get to eat two meals, than their fear of the virus. There have been many suicide cases in the past 3 months. And most of them are the people from the poorest families. So there is a pain I experience all the time, in sympathy of those who are suffering.

On a personal level, fortunately I have not faced any challenges because of the virus or finances. I belong to a middle class family. Since childhood I have seen my Aama's (Mother's) mission to save people so that we won't have to struggle/suffer during the times of crises. As for my work, I finally got the opportunity to work on my long-postponed projects. I started my YouTube channel, read four books, and wrote more than a hundred essays organizing my thoughts on relationships, career, passion, leadership, and more. From this point of view, I see the virus as a gift for all the hard work I have done in the past decade of my life. Since my grade 8 (11 years before today) I had always worked hard; for a long time it was to study well, later to do well in my work. I needed this time off, to rest, to reflect,

to organize, and to be prepared.

About my students: I miss them and think about them quite often. They are in villages and it's very hot there. During the summer in Terai part of Nepal (where most of them are from), the temperature is unbearably high. Since they are from the poorest of families, I always wonder how they are doing.



After 2 weeks into lockdown, I went to Chelsea Center. Thanks to the mirror I was not alone.

A part of me is happy to see that the children are away from Papa's House. Why? I believe they need life circumstances to help them see what privileges they have in this Sanctuary. I am happy to see they are not coming to Chelsea Center anymore and I believe they are missing the warmth and the support they experience in this place. And strangely enough, I am happy they are not studying. Studying sometimes (actually a lot of times) is like a burden for them. I am happy that they are freer psychologically from their studies and the homework and exams. I believe they too need some time off. Their

lives as students are always engrossed in studying, but now they have a lot of free time.

And lastly, for my place of work: I miss going to Chelsea Center. I had many bright plans for the new Nepali year and I cannot wait to work on these ideas and help all the people we serve to live better, to learn better. A part of me feels bad that my team and I are not working, but we still receive our pay cheques. Good news: we have started online class for Aunties. Isn't this a cool initiative!?! Hats off to the team for starting this project!

My heart is always filled with gratitude for all the individuals who support our Papa's House.

UPDATE FROM HOME

When I heard about the epidemic disease for the first time, there was a huge feeling of fear. People were worried about getting the virus even though it had not spread in Nepal. I took it lightly in the beginning, but when the news of the people dead throughout the world came out rapidly, then it came to my mind that the virus was really powerful.

When the lockdown started on the 23rd of March 2020, it was fun and I spent one week with joy and happiness as there were no college classes, no office work, and I could sleep until late morning. Watching movies, reading good books and chatting with friends and family for the week was good. But then the lockdown increased day by day, and the boring time came. We couldn't walk outside; staying inside the whole day brought the biggest pain in my head. The variety decreases and sometimes it goes to zero or negative when we consume the same types of foods over time, and this had happened to me.

I think the virus might be a role played the by God to control the ecosystem and teach humans about humanity. When there was huge earthquake in Nepal in 2015, we slept outside the house on the ground for a week or more, and we were afraid to enter the house at that time. Just the opposite, this virus keeps us inside the house the whole day and night, and we afraid to go out. I don't know what kind of situation the world is facing now, but it is not acceptable and will be a great challenge for humans to get out of this. Time is the biggest changer itself and nobody can stop it.



So far, the lockdown has taught us the following:

- The most important person in the world is a farmer since the most work is done by the farmer.
- The biggest power comes from food and especially grains.
- It is foolishness to go against Nature.
- People can walk and therefore can survive without any vehicles or transport facilities.
- All people prefer to suffer and die in their own motherland.
- Poor people have more strength to fight against disease than rich people, but poor people suffer the most.

Please let all of us help to those who are suffering from hunger and give them relief to encourage to fight against the coronavirus. I am praying for the whole world for peace and good health for all.

Now that I am back in Nepal, I am going to share some good and bad adventures while I was in China. My major subject is Hotel Management and I went to China on the 12th of November 2019 for further study and for practical experience and internship, as well as to learn the Chinese language.

It was good journey by plane because of the beautiful mountains and I could see different scenery. When we reached China it was exciting to see new things there. We had to manage everything by ourselves. Everybody feels difficulties in new places and likewise we also felt difficulties, but our senior students helped us. We could go in a group if we went outside like to the market or to use metro etc. It was difficult to communicate with Chinese people because we didn't know how to speak Chinese language and they don't know how to speak the English language.



After three weeks we went to Wyndham Hotel for our internship. There were other Nepalese students there too. I was placed in a Japanese Restaurant and I got a good manager who taught me each rule and regulation of the restaurant. He even taught me Chinese words used in the restaurant.

Slowly it became interesting to work there and learn the Chinese language. In my department every staff was good, and I was enjoying them.

I worked in the hotel one and a half months and again we went back to BIGC college hostel in order to get our visa extension. We waited for one month and February 1 was our date to begin work again.

But this year we had bad luck: the coronavirus came, so we were unable to go to the hotel. It was difficult to stay in the hostel because we could not go outside to buy vegetables. In the market everything was expensive and there were shortages of items due to the virus. There was only one market in the college compound where we could go to buy something, but it was too expensive. It was difficult to get green leafy vegetables. Most of the Nepalese students are used to eating noodles, bread, and sometimes chapatti during this situation. Due to the virus, our days were getting worse so many Nepalis were leaving China. So we also started planning to leave by putting different queries to our college sir, the manager of BIGC College. When we shared our situation in China, Papa's House managed our tickets on the last flight out for Nepal. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share about my experience in China.





UPDATE FROM HOME

Here comes Covid-19 which started from the city of Hubei in Wuhan Providence in China. When it started to spread worldwide, I was in China too, in the city of Beijing. Everything got closed and we were about to suffer from the shortage of food at the same time that Papa helped us to return back to Nepal.

Currently I am in Hetauda due to lockdown and here most of the people are more scared of the lockdown rather than the virus. Since there has been a lockdown for more than 4 months, everyone has the same problem i.e. economic. There is no work, but they have to feed themselves by buying everything. They have to pay the house rent, children's school fee, but with no income and not getting support from the government yet. Even I have not been worried about the virus, but rather more worried about how to feed myself and return back to my own house.

It's really the most horrible time ever I have

felt. Last time when we had an earthquake and lost our house, that situation was not painful as much as it is now. There is nothing we can do: no moving from one place to other, no family gathering and having a good time with all of them.

In the context of Nepal, the lockdown has been a curse to only the poor and those who don't have political power. Those who are rich and have power have been moving from one place to another and don't have to suffer from the shortage of food. The people are worried and in a painful situation, and everyone is worried about their family and relatives. I have been waiting to get back to my studies and family and am hoping to see everything getting better and normal as usual.

I wish that everyone will stay at home and be safe. Life is the most valuable and important wealth of humans in this universe. Money can't buy life but life can buy money.

UPDATE FROM HOME

When Covid-19 was first discovered in Wuhan City in China on December 2019, the five of us from Papa's House who were working there were all scared and came back to Nepal. This also included many other Nepalese students in Beijing, China. Nobody imagined that it was going to spread to the whole world like a bushfire.

Even though Nepal was at first declared as a green zone (out of danger from the coronavirus) by the World Health Organization, the situation of Covid-19 has been a great challenge to the people of whole world including Nepal. As I write this, it is the 61st day of lockdown in Nepal and the number of cases is increasing rapidly day by day. The total number of confirmed cases has reached 584 to this date.

At the beginning of lockdown each and everyone was very excited to rest at home because of their duties and work stress. But these days we all hate to be at home doing the same thing daily. Now it has been a cruel time to each of us. As we all are very much known that life is always about ups and down in this situation also I can see life of people in two ways:

Firstly, due to Covid-19 some people are accepting the chance to spend their time with their families and learn many things while staying at home. It has been a good time to share their feelings of love and affection to their family members.

On the other hand I can see many people are starving due to lack of good financial



position and looking here and there living hand-to-mouth, and finally lose their lives.

Everyone is hoping and praying this epidemic ends soon. My daily routine has been changed now. I wake up late morning, cook food at around 10:00am and eat at around 12:00pm. After that I have online class conducted by my university. Sometimes I watch the news feeds about the current situation around the world and sometimes watch movies.

Hope this hardest time goes fast and we will see everyone again soon.

UPDATE FROM HOME

I don't actually remember the exact day Covid started, but it was when I was in China. I still remember that we were staying in a hostel in Beijing, China. After Covid started, the Chinese government started to close the schools and universities of Beijing and all over China. Following the rapid increase of the Covid virus all of the foreign students were leaving China. I remember there were nine Nepali students left in the hostel and we also decided to return to Nepal. On February 7th we left for Nepal.



Finally we were back in Nepal. After some weeks some symptoms of the Covid virus started to show up and on the 23rd the lockdown started in Nepal.

At the beginning of the lockdown we were not allowed to go out of our houses. At that time I remember I spent the day using social media websites and searching for

some videos related to cooking. And I also read books (Nepali food books) which I found in my mom's house. Papa also helped us with money to get some vegeta-

bles. We (my brother Sujana and I) used to wake up early in the morning to buy the vegetables because shops were only allowed to open till 8 am. During the day-time we spent the days with watching movies and reading Nepali food books).

Now there it is as strict as at the beginning, so now we go walking to get some fresh air in the evening with some

of the other Papa's boys. So I spent and am spending my days like this during this lockdown.

I hope all the Papa's house kids are staying safe.

Tons of love to all the Papa's House members, from Sandesh

When the virus was reported from China in December 2019, nobody had imagined it was going to go all over the world like a bushfire, keeping people away from one another. On 24th January 2020, the first infected person was tested positive in Nepal.

On March 8th, I headed to a Ghandruk placement with three volunteers: Mike from USA, Amanda from Denmark, and Tanya from Germany. We were going to visit a school there. It was a short five-day trip. The first day was a very long bus ride and 20 minutes of walking. On the second day, we hiked a total of six hours and made it to the school very tired and hungry. After breakfast, we played Holi with the villagers and children from the school. It was more like we didn't have any option other than to play with them, and it was lots of fun!

Since everyone going to Ghandruk had to have an Annapurna trekking permit, Amanda thought she should do some trekking and see the mountains while we were there. On the third day, Amanda and I headed to Ghorepane. It was a really-tough hike. It took 10 hours to get to Ghorepane from Ghujrung passing, all of it a challenging icy path, uphill and downhill. We took lots of ginger tea breaks on the way. The view from Poonhill was breathtaking and I'm very thankful to Amanda for taking me with her on this trip. After the trip was over, we decided to stop in Pokhara and do a little shopping and enjoy the view of the lake. On arrival in Pokhara, we learned that the situation of the virus was terrible, and Amanda and Tanya had to book tickets to return to their countries the next day. After Tanya and Amanda left



the Volunteer House it was just Mike and me.

On the 24th of March, the government of Nepal implemented the lockdown. Mike and I got enough vegetables and food for us to last for several days. I did most of the cooking and Mike did the cleaning. Every other day at around 7 am we would go out to buy the supplies that we needed for the house. Now, Mike has apartment for himself while in lockdown and is hoping to extend his visa when the offices open again. On the 16th of May, the first death because of the coronavirus in Nepal was announced. This has scared everyone and the government has decided to extend the lockdown to fight this pandemic. I have been spending lots of time with my sister during this lockdown and can't wait to go see my parents when this is over.

Stay safe and stay happy everyone!



While the whole world is fighting with the coronavirus, many are pleased to stay at home. It has been more than two months that I have been with my family and away from Papa's House.

During these lockdown days I learned about leadership wisdom from a book by Rohit Sharma. The book is so interesting and I have been reading till now.

During the lockdown one of my elder sisters got married (my father's brother's daughter). My father's elder brother lives nearby my house. There were only a few people at the ceremony because we didn't invite other relatives because the virus was spreading day by day and still has been increasing.

I usually wake up at 5:30am and prepare tea. After having tea with my family I sit to study. During the afternoon time I watch videos and learn new vocabulary and help my mom in the kitchen garden (in the photo you'll see the vegetables that we planted in front of our house).

These are the things that I did during my lockdown and still have been doing.



I've had both bad and good experiences during the quarantine. My bad experiences were that I was out of food and also had a shortage of money. I thought about Papa and wrote an email to him telling my problems. He came to where I was staying and handed me some money which I utilized to buy some food. He also told me that if I needed more he is ready to give until the lockdown opens. I am very grateful for him caring for me.

I also feel lonely since there are no gatherings like we used to have when we were in Papa's House, but I still try to contact some of my friends and have talks with them. It is very good to hear from them.

Here most of the people are out of their house in the morning for buying the vegetables and other stuff. Since the shops

are opened only in the morning, we have to wake up faster than anyone else to get the groceries. Then during the rest of the daytime all the people are staying inside their home. The place where I am staying is very strict and does not allow outsiders to come in.

I always wonder about my board exam since we haven't taken it yet. I am worried that as soon as the lockdown opens we will have the board exam. But still we have the advantage of getting more time to review for it. I always stay in my room and review all the chapters which I have learned in college. I have joined online classes which have helped me a lot by keeping me learning new topics.

Sometimes I go to the terrace and see all the people sitting on their terraces and talking loudly with each other about the pandemic virus. They discuss the people who got this virus and count the people and then start to imagine the expanding number days of lockdown. Whenever I get out from my room I always hear the neighbours talking about the coronavirus which is good that I don't have to see the news on TV, but this talk always continues on the same topic again and again and does not stop. The women continue speaking and will not stop till they get something to do.

I hope and pray for all the people living across the world to be safe and that the pandemic virus goes away soon.



When one cannot go outside in physical world, one should try to go inside in spiritual world. This is what I am practicing these days. Of course, this lockdown has made people's lives both difficult and miserable, but has given me an opportunity to get to know myself and family more. I have been spending quality family time.

My day starts with physical and mental exercises, followed by self study. Most of the afternoon's time is spent watching teaching tutorials, movies, and web series and working in the yard. Since I work in Kathmandu, I usually do not get time to know my birthplace Kapilvastu (also the birthplace of Gautama Buddha). This lockdown has given me an opportunity to know more about my neighbours and villagers, while keeping social distance.

This pandemic has brought people back into their villages and is stopping their other income source since they are spending most of their time (including my family) either in their yards or in the fields. Since now the government has full human resources available, I hope the government adopts better plans and budgets (such as for improvement of irrigation and helping to provide seeds and fertilizers) for the agriculture sector this year. I think this will bring about an increase in this year's vegetable and other crop production rates in Nepal.

I see both, pros and cons of this lockdown. It's up to us to find its pros and make it productive.

UPDATE FROM HOME



In the beginning of the lockdown, I was very scared of this pandemic COVID-19, while looking at the news of other countries like China, Spain, Italy, USA etc. People were dying rapidly in large numbers. It was really difficult to say goodbye to all my NOH family especially Papa. But after returning to my H\hometown (Dang) it wasn't that bad. It was normal in the village. People are busy in their work. Very few people were wearing masks.

I have free time and I think about my life. I study my academic notes in the morning and also I tutor young kids in nursery LKG, KG, grade 1 and grade 2. Everyday I

cook the evening meal and I cook far better these days than before. I have done photo-shoots many times, going to beautiful places wearing cultural dresses, saris, Magyar dress etc. and have also made some Tiktok videos.

I have planted some vegetables and flowers. I water them every day. Now it's the rainy season so it's time for planting the paddy. I was so excited to plan, but it wasn't as fun as my expectation. In the muddy water there were lots of earthworms and leeches and I got an allergy on my legs and my hand and back aches. I went only for 3 days. I have photos below.

I take care of my father who went through an operation. He had an intestinal obstruction. We took him Bhairawa and had to stay there for 5 days. Staying in hospital to take care of sick people is a really difficult job. Taking care of him I was about be sick staying in hospital. He is alcoholic and I convinced him everyday not to drink alcohol. So far I am successful.

I miss my NOH family especially my papa bear and am hoping to see you all soon. I miss my college and my friends. I can't wait to finish my last year of dental hygienist courses. The best thing that happened is my exam results were published and I am third in the class with 80.11%. I would have gotten a scholarship if I had gotten just a little bit more 80.36%.

Take care and stay healthy.

MY EXPERIENCE

The world is going through an unprecedented pandemic and these are strange, difficult, and anxious times for everyone. The COVID-19 pandemic may have shut down much of the human-controlled part of the world, but thankfully nature remains the same. Birds still chirp, flowers burst into bloom, breezes sway the trees.

It was December when I first heard about the outbreak in China and was worried about its consequences in Nepal. My mind was looming with thoughts thinking what will happen if it comes to Nepal. How will we protect our children? My anxiety made me read the news every morning to get an update on the spread of the virus and to my horror the virus had spread to most parts of the world in no time. Five of our children were in Beijing doing their Hotel Management course. We were worried about them and wanted to immediately bring them back home. Even though it was difficult to book the plane tickets, we somehow managed to book the flights and bring them back. Shortly after they came back to Nepal and fulfilled their quarantine time, they went back to the village to their families.

As the number of cases in India was increasing rapidly but with few cases recorded in Nepal as of the second week of March, the Government of Nepal decided to take action to stop the spread of virus. A complete lockdown throughout the country was announced. Before the lockdown, we managed to send all the children of Papa's House back to their families as we thought



they will be safer with their families during this pandemic. We had only three children and Anita (house manager) left in Papa's House and we were already longing to see our children return to maintain the same busy-ness of the house. Even I started working from home, but at least once every week I came to Papa's House to check in with Anita and provide her money for the house supplies.

When the lockdown initially started I was excited to be able to spend more time with my family. My schedule at work usually demands long hours and suddenly with so much time on hand I would be able to spend some of it on cooking, baking, cleaning, teaching my daughter to do some knitting, watching lots of movies and series on Netflix, and spending quality time with family. At that time I had not imagined that the lockdown would be extended for this long.

After spending two weeks with my family, I started to miss my office and the children of Papa's House. Even when there was a complete lockdown, I had to make frequent visits to banks to withdraw money, deposit salary check, provide support to the Kanti Hospital to supply baby food and continue our financial support to some of the needy families at the oncology ward. It was not easy to get the permission to do all of this amidst the lockdown. There were times when I had to call the police station to get approval to go these offices. And even with the approval I was stopped many times and was allowed to go only after clarifying my purpose and presenting my supporting documents. Back then, I used to wonder, "Will this ever be over and will we be able to come back to our normal life or is this 'the new normal' now

The lockdown was partially lifted in June and with that I decided to work from my office. With the financial year ending here in Nepal, there is a lot of pending government work that we have to go through within the next few months. I have to submit this year's project proposal for Papa's

House and submit it to different government offices. The process has become even more difficult because of the pandemic. We are not allowed to enter the office and have to stand in line to submit the file through a small window. People were very cautious during the first few weeks of June as they maintained social distance of at least 3-5 meters and wore masks. But with the restrictions slowly wearing out, I have found that people are being more negligent and are not following the social distancing protocols. The government has not eased out the reporting process for organizations and all the submissions need to be done in time. So, these days, most of my time goes in coordinating with our auditor to prepare the audit report of Papa's House and make documents ready for renewal. I have yet to make several visits to the government offices to get our Project Approval.

I frequently receive calls from our children as they share their routine in the village and I sense their eagerness to come back to Papa's House as soon as possible. I have promised to have them picked up as soon as the transportation within the district resumes. After they return, the children will be kept in self isolation for some time as most of them will be coming from the infected districts. It's uncertain when the schools and colleges will open and when we will have all our children at Papa's House, but for now, all we can do is remember the good times and eagerly wait for this to be over. I can't wait to enjoy Saturday Tiffin with them, listening to their experiences and going back to our old normal times!

